United Nations A/60/613

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 December 2005
English
Original: Spanish

Sixtieth session
Agenda items 13, 52, 56 (b), 71 (d), 97 (e), 97 (f), 97 (k), 97 (u), 97 (v), 97 (w) and 97 (y)

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Letter dated 19 December 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you as President Pro Tempore of the Central American Integration System (SICA) to request that you circulate, as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 13, 52, 56 (b), 71 (d), 97 (e), 97 (f), 97 (k), 97 (u), 97 (v) and 97 (w), the Declaration of León

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signed on 2 December 2005 in the city of León Santiago de los Caballeros, Nicaragua, on the occasion of the Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the countries members of SICA (see annex).

(*Signed*) Eduardo J. **Sevilla Somoza**
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 19 December 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Central American Integration System (SICA)

Declaration of León

We, the Heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Central American Integration System (SICA), and of the Dominican Republic as an associated State, meeting on 2 December 2005 in the city of León Santiago de los Caballeros, Nicaragua, with the intention and desire to further consolidate the Central American Integration System and to strengthen it as a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development,

Have agreed:

1. To reaffirm the mandate we have given to the Council of Ministers for Economic Integration and to the intersectoral councils to continue to work towards the establishment of the Customs Union, for which purpose they should prepare as soon as possible a schedule of activities for the first six months of 2006, giving priority to institutional aspects, the customs regulations framework, the harmonization of tariffs, and intraregional free trade in the products listed in annex A.

2. To recognize the efforts and progress made by the ad hoc working group during the joint evaluation phase of the regional economic integration process by Central America and the European Union, reaffirming our desire that the next session of the European Union/Central American session of the Mixed Commission should prepare the ground for the announcement at the Summit between Latin American and Caribbean States and the European Union, to be held in May 2006 in Vienna, Austria, of the launching of negotiations on an association agreement between the two regions that includes a free trade agreement.

3. To provide training for the competent authorities in the area of energy development so that they can continue to work on the development of a regional energy integration and development plan with a view to establishing short-, medium- and long-term strategies and objectives for achieving energy sustainability in the region.

4. To note with satisfaction the offer of financial support made by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) for the development of the region's energy sector and also to urge CABEI to continue to provide timely support for the investment needs of Central America.

5. To reaffirm our interest in the energy initiative of Mexico and to request the Ministerial Commission established at the Summit of Mar del Plata to submit to us, prior to the meeting in Cancún, a report containing recommendations on the technical studies and necessary actions that would permit us to give further consideration to this proposal.

6. To welcome the recent cross-sectoral agreement concluded to implement the regional programme for the reduction of vulnerability and environmental degradation, and to thank the European Union for providing the funds for its implementation.

7. To reaffirm our decision to consolidate the Meso-American Biological Corridor and to continue to support cross-sectoral initiatives within the framework of existing regional programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

8. To support the presentation of a joint regional position by the cross-sectoral working group on water at the Fourth World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico in March 2006.

9. To reaffirm the priority that we attach to the organization of a special forum on the harmonization and alignment of regional cooperation in Central America and to request the Office of the President Pro Tempore and the General Secretariat of SICA to continue their efforts to ensure that the forum is held before the Fourth Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union.

10. To stress the importance of signing and adopting the following regional instruments which are aimed at strengthening regional democratic security and combating organized crime and impunity:

- The Central American Treaty on Arrest Warrants and Simplified Extradition Procedures, signed by Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic;
- The Protocol to the Central American Treaty on the Recovery and Return of Stolen, Unlawfully Appropriated or Retained Vehicles;
- The Code of Conduct of Central American States on the Transfer of Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materiel, adopted by Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

11. To instruct the relevant authorities to sign, as soon as possible, a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concerning the Central American Programme of Action to Combat the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

12. To adopt the strategy on border police security with a view to changing border policing models in order to facilitate Central American regional cooperation in the fight against organized crime.

13. To welcome the progress made under the plan to harmonize migration policies and to instruct Ministers of the Interior and/or Security to continue to strengthen the common technology platform for dealing with migration matters, integrated migration controls, and the introduction of a common Central American visa.

14. To recognize the significant contribution made by the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America as a regional security model and, in that regard, to instruct the Central American Security Commission to define as rapidly as possible a programme of action setting out the priorities for regional democratic security and to meet periodically to carry out its functions.

15. To highlight the actions being taken by the Central American Security Commission to implement the arms limitation programme, such as the adoption of new confidence-building measures, and in consequence, to instruct the Security Commission to define the reasonable balance of regional forces within a period of not more than eight months.

16. To recognize the importance of strengthening national institutions established to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to provide assistance to its victims, as well as the importance of participating actively in regional and international initiatives that have a positive impact in the fight against this scourge.

17. To highlight the importance of the signing, by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, of an institutional regulatory framework for the legislative measures introduced by SICA and of the admission and participation of observer and associated States in the System.

18. To emphasize how important it is for the ad hoc commission on institutional reorganization to pursue its work, giving priority to defining the relationship between a strategic agenda for integration and a suitable institutional framework for its implementation.

19. To highlight the importance of the efforts of the Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture and of the General Secretariat of SICA, which began on 1 July 2005 and will continue for the next 10 years, to ensure the sustainable exploitation of fisheries and aquaculture.

20. To thank the European Commission, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Japan, Spain, Sweden and Norway, as well as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for the support provided for regional fisheries and aquaculture policies and strategies, and to invite both them and other cooperating countries and entities to continue to build on these efforts to integrate the Central American isthmus.

21. To welcome the initiative of the Government of El Salvador to establish a regional observatory in Central America to monitor the strategy for the prevention of violence in society and for the rehabilitation and reintegration of young people in high-risk situations or in conflict with the law.

22. To support the organization of the Forty-Third Inter-American Conference on Housing, to be held from 12 to 16 February 2006 in Guatemala.

The Heads of State and Government of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic congratulate the Government of Nicaragua on its excellent work as President Pro Tempore of SICA during the current six-month period. We also wish to thank the people and Government of Nicaragua for their hospitality and for the excellent facilities and services provided during this meeting.

Done at León Santiago de los Caballeros, Republic of Nicaragua, on **2 December 2005.**

(*Signed*) Enrique **Bolaños Geyer**
President of the Republic of Nicaragua

(*Signed*) Ricardo **Maduro**
President of the Republic of Honduras

(*Signed*) Martín **Torrijos Espino**
President of the Republic of Panama

(*Signed*) Ana Vilma **Albanez de Escobar**
Vice-President of the Republic of El Salvador

(*Signed*) Roberto **Tovar Faja**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Costa Rica

(*Signed*) Jorge **Briz Abularach**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala

(*Signed*) Juan **Guilliani Cury**
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic

(*Signed*) Moisés **Cal**
Ambassador
Belize